AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 3, 7 and 10, as shown below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming a first insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a first trench in said first insulating film;

forming a second insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate so as to fill up said first trench;

forming a plurality of second trenches in an area excluding a region immediately above said first trench portion by removing said second insulating film selectively;

forming a metal film so as to fill in said second trenches;

forming a plurality of wirings by removing said metal film lying outside said second trenches;

forming a third trench by removing said second insulating film lying above said first trench and said second insulating film lying in said trench; and

forming a third insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate so as to form a cavity within said third trench to form an air gap.

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Claim 2 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of forming a third trench to form an air gap comprises removing said second insulating film throughout the whole region between said wirings.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method according to claim 1[[:]],

wherein said step of forming a first trench comprises forming a via hole together with said first trench, in a region of said first insulating film other than the region where said first trench is formed,

said step of forming a plurality of second trenches comprises connecting said second trenches to said via holes, and

said step of forming a metal film comprises filling it in said via holes together with said second trenches.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of forming a third trench comprises removing said second insulating film along the region where said first trench is formed.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of forming a third trench comprises removing said second insulating film, by using an etchant capable of removing said insulating film selectively with respect to said metal film without using a mask.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said third insulating film is made of a low-dielectric-constant material.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming an insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

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forming a plurality of first trenches for wirings by removing said insulating film selectively;

forming a metal film so as to fill in said first trenches for wirings;

forming a plurality of wirings by removing said metal film lying outside said first trenches for wirings;

forming a second trench by removing said insulating film throughout the whole region between said wirings, thereby exposing a portion of the semiconductor substrate; and

forming an interlayer insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate after ~~the step of~~ forming said second trench,

wherein when said ~~step of forming an~~ interlayer insulating film ~~comprises forming~~ is disposed on said semiconductor substrate, a cavity is formed within said second trench.

Claims 8 - 9(cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming an insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a plurality of first trenches for wirings by removing said insulating film selectively;

forming a metal film so as to fill in said first trenches for wirings;

forming a plurality of wirings by removing said metal film lying outside said first trenches for wirings;

forming a second trench by removing said insulating film throughout the whole region between said wirings thereby exposing a portion of the semiconductor substrate; and

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forming an interlayer insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate after ~~the step of~~ forming said second trench,

wherein said interlayer insulating film is made of a low-dielectric-constant material.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method according to claim 7, wherein said step of forming a second trench comprises removing said insulating film by using an etchant capable of removing said insulating film selectively with respect to said metal film without using a mask.

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